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LARUELLE: THE REAL AND THE CONCEPT OF QUANTUM MARXISM (MARX WITH PLANCK)

PHILOFICTION LARUELLE, MARX, MARXISM, PLANCK, QUANTUM THEORY, REAL, SUPERPOSITION

The real is initially defined as the given-without-given, which also means that we cannot observe the real without a minimal concept. As a unilateral causality that goes primarily in one direction, namely from the real to the world of thought, the real simultaneously signifies a (unilateral) duality, that of the given-without-givenness and the given, the one and the mixtures in the world, whereby it must always be borne in mind that the given-without-givenness also remains closed to the given-of-the-given, while the latter conversely also excludes itself, albeit in a less original way, namely on the basis of transcendental posits. Laruelle describes "givenness" as the first operation of thinking according to the given, i.e.

givenness of the given, but it is determined by the given in the last instance. And non-philosophy describes the given as real-one that is radically immanent to itself in its essence as non-constituted, or in other words,*t*he real is conceived as an instance that is defined by its radical immanence under the conditions of possibility. The real is given by itself, namely as vision-in-one or as one-in-one, and thus demonstrates its closedness to thought. Consequently, one should not mix the radical or immanent real with an absolute real, whether this is conceived as a substantial or spiritual thing. Radical and not absolute, the real has no interface that could communicate with the world or the symbolic, it only has a uniface with the world. The real can neither be known nor thought, but it can at least be described with axioms. In his concept of non-philosophy, Laruelle thus understands the real as the only transcendental, namely as an axiom, and thus every thought becomes an immediate expression of the real. Ergo, in the course of the radical immanence of the real, there is still a certain transcendence, which Laruelle justifies as minimally transcendental, but nevertheless the real in the last instance determines knowledge as a non-philosophical knowledge.

There is nothing more chic in philosophical modernity than to conceive the real as an expression of thought, and if, conversely, the real is conceived as primary, then it is again inscribed in a transcendence that is reciprocally determined by thought. However, for Laruelle, no ontics or ontology, no effect, no life or any other object-subject*can be* infiltrated into the real as its essence; rather, the immanence of the real indicates that it itself tolerates nothing but axioms or descriptions. The given in its radical sense is immanent in itself and does not give rise to the construction of an object for knowledge, so that the figure given-without-given-ness already indicates the closure of the real to any philosophical operation that could serve to produce the given. It is thus clear to Laruelle that the real remains eternally inconsistent in ontological terms. The identification of the real with being truly appears as the doom of ontology. ,

According to Laruelle, the real is the "phenomenon" in itself; in its closedness and indifference it should not be understood as (pre-)given by transcendental synthesis, rather the real always already shows itself as manifest-without-manifestation, and at the same time the real is that which has always already taken possession of us, whereby it is by no means to be understood as a datum or a fact that we perhaps believe we can grasp through various modes of functioning of philosophy/science. The real is thus given before any cognition and/or intuition. (Cf. Laruelle 2013f: 41-50). As given-without-givenness, the real does not call for any reflexive statements or even self-reflection. The real eludes meaning, it cannot be regarded as the truth of something and it has no epistemic structure whatsoever – in this respect, it is neither captured by any knowledge nor does it reflect it. On the other hand, meaning as a conditional phenomenon is dependent on meaningless, but to a certain extent conceptually conceivable reproductions in reality (in contrast to the real), which become effective both via the socio-economic level and via the pathways of the neurological. (Cf. Brassier 2013: 141) Ultimately, the real exists in its opaque irreducibility undivided or without any fissure before any transcendental unity or identity, which in the philosophical tradition may also be considered undivided, although (conceptual) identity is always presupposed in order to establish the reciprocal transcendental synthesis between empiricism and metaphysics.Finally, the real turns out to be anti-hermeneutic, so that it is withdrawn from any

kind of interpretation from the outset, it also gives birth to itself as anti-phenomenological, because it does not reveal itself to any subject of perception, no matter how careful, and in a certain way it points to a kind of hyper-territorialization, or rather non-territorialization, precisely because it does not traverse or flow through any spaces and communicates with nothing at all. Consequently, Laruelle's discourse relies with all consistency on the real, which is to be regarded as closed and irreflexive and for this very reason is directly given to transcendental experience, without passing through the (conceptual) mediation of a universal horizon, be this interpreted as nothingness, ecstasy, difference or the universal. The real remains the non-sufficient and at the same time necessary condition for every form of thought. In his text *Nihil Unbound*, Ray Brassier writes the following about Laruell's concept of the real: "The real is not the negation of being, since this would be to re-constitute it in opposition to something, but rather its degree-zero. What is given 'without-givenness', or 'non-auto-decisionally', suspending the entwinement of givenness and given, neither withdraws from presence nor subtracts itself from presentation; for it is precisely in doing so that it becomes transcendently co-constituted by the relation to its own contrary. Rather, it is immanently given as 'being-nothing'." (Brassier 2007: 138) "Being-nothing" is to be understood here as complementary to not-one, which is to be regarded as another name for unilaterality, with which the not-one is set as vision-in-one in place of being, whereby the not-one represents a mode of the closedness of the one, on the one hand real and not effected, on the other hand transcendental *and ef*fected by the event of philosophical nothingness – unilaterality. By favoring the first aspect, the concept of unilaterality has to test the primacy of the closedness of the real over the philosophical concept of negation again and again. (At this point, one could ask how this position relates to Adorno's conception of negation, which does not want to follow a logic of consequences *a*nd understands negation as non-productive). A*nd so the* real does not refer to any differential phenomenon that could say, for example, that there is something that remains when a system is subtracted from the (present) world in order to simultaneously obtain an environment that could then perhaps be identified with the real. But the real is also not an undifferentiated multiplicity like a kind of magma in the sense of Castoriadis, it is not a modality of being (whereby the categories of modality are always those of existence: Dasein-Nichtsein), but the real is immanently given as "being-nothing", which only secondarily allows being to confront (philosophical) nothingness. Moreover, the real can be understood as the gap that insists between the compulsion to be this or that and the cause to be such and such a sign (thinking). If being no longer causes anything to be a sign, while these no longer compel anything of being, then nothingness seems to take the other side of the real. If the real were to present itself as a reality, then the nothing would be that which does not appear in the representation, but which for this very reason gives reality an effect. However, this is still far too philosophical, because the real is not reality, but that which, in its indifference to being and to thinking in the determination-in-the-last-instance, causes us to think or to be a sign. to be a sign; the real thus refers to the fact that it does not exist in absolute isolation from thought/language, that it is not absolutely separate from transcendentality, for then one would in turn translate the real back into a transcendence; instead, it is simply not in any reciprocal relation with the philosophical forms of thought/judgements. Only in this respect could one then perhaps also say that the real is actually to be sought in the fractures, inconsistencies and cracks of (capitalist) reality.

In his essay *Marx with Planck* (Laruelle 2017), Laruelle calls for a Marxist gnosis and consequently calls himself not an ordinary Marxist, but a Marxist oriented towards the future, who is in search of an aleatory teleology that no longer has any connection with what Marxist philosophy has hitherto prescribed as the measure and method for Marxism.
Laruelle in no way revises the distinction between Marxism as a sedimented tradition with a multitude of authors, to which he himself belongs, and a Marxist philosophy with which one still believes today that one can return to an authentic Marxism, i.e. to its philosophical origins (which are repeatedly linked to Hegel). However, Laruelle was not entirely successful in ridding Marxism of Hegelianism, as intended by Althusser and Henry, for example, as it remained trapped in a positivist structuralism in the case of Althusser and in a transcendental and egological immanence in the case of Henry. While Althusserianism ended up in the well-known playground and battleground for Marxist intellectuals, Henry gave the groundbreaking signs for a Marxism for Christians. For Laruelle, however, Marxism is neither a purely structural science nor a transcendental philosophy, but a gnosis, which is a thought after the past, as well as a science fiction, which is a thought of the future. Laruelle calls this philo-fiction, a science fiction in which fiction is no longer a literary and imaginary interweaving that refers to already acquired scientific and technical objects, but in which science and its future cause determine the philosophically given as fiction. Philo-fiction is the unified theory of philosophy and science fiction.

Why does Laruelle use quantum theory for this in the fifth stage of non-philosophy? He first gives two reasons for the general use of quantum theory: 1) its hard, technical modeling and extension into other areas of physics and 2) its use as a new model for a rationality related to the human sciences, i.e. its conjugation (complex mapping) with a theoretical-experimental field (aesthetics, ecology, Marxism, etc.) (Ibid.: 158)

The second modeling involves a certain theoretical and especially a mathematical simplification of quantum theory beyond its non-negotiable core, which is the mathematical minimum of any science. And this modeling is also the basic condition for a futurist philosophical practice, which has to be a thought experiment under minimal algebraic conditions with and within the philosophical material. Laruelle calls for a complex conjugation (mapping compatible with addition and multiplication) of quantum theory and Marxism, a conjunction that is completely different from all the conjugations of the ideas of Marxist philosophers with the ideas of Marx that have occurred in history. The new theoretical construction of Marxism envisioned by Laruelle affirms the fundamental principles of quantum theory on the one hand and allows it to act as a Marxist material within a philosophical horizon that is not conceived in its Hegelian form on the other. The construction of an inseparable Marxist-and-quantum-theoretical problematic arises on the basis of two entangled theoretical impulses that seek to change the formalism of philosophy without changing its materiality. This in turn requires the liberation of certain quantum-theoretical components from their mathematical apparatus, reducing them to a vectorial apparatus, while at the same time depriving the philosophical components.

Laruelle is thus concerned with a non-structural quantum modeling of the elementary foundations of Marxism and its philosophical contexts. In this way, the history of Marxism is no longer to continue as the object of an endless hermeneutic, a hermeneutic that hopes to find a true understanding of Marx at some point, but rather a radical transformation of the theoretical foundations of Marxism as well as a new balance between science and philosophy (under the dominance of science) is sought. How can Marxism be freed from the dialectic, its appropriation by humanism and the dramatization by philosophy that have so far determined all its philosophical approaches? For Laruelle, in addition to Hegelianism, its macroscopic rationality and Marx's references to Newton in particular must be eliminated. Only then can the desired superposition of Marx and Planck and a unified theory (not a synthesis), freed from philosophical decisions and unnecessary accessories, finally lead to a renewed non-Marxism or non-standard Marxism. The unexpected encounter of Marxism with quantum theory also enables the renewal of its Gnostic aspect. Marxism today must take up the most innovative variables of philosophy and science, of which quantum theory is the first element for Laruelle.

Laruelle first devotes himself to the famous relationship between productive forces and relations of production, which traditional Marxism understands as contradictory, i.e. as a unity and struggle of opposites. (ibid.: 160) In Marxism, both components (productive forces/relations of production) are not simple variables, but are always to be understood as relations, although the former appear to be an entity, so that we are dealing with a techno-scientific body in relation to the relations of production, which are understood as the relation par excellence. To subsequently think of the relation between productive forces and relations of production as resulting in a fusion or synthesis (mode of production) is far too simple a concept; rather, one should construe the relation between the two variables as two inverse becomings (coherence/incoherence) rather than as a relation between two types of isolated bodies. These two processes are equivalent to the variables, since the becoming is one of the relations of the variables.

Laruelle now introduces the concept of superposition into this problem. It means that a third wave is added to two waves in such a way that all waves remain of the same nature. Thinking here is not based on the object, but on the amplitude of the waves. Superposition is irreducible to a philosophical synthesis and as a materialized thought it does not simply consist in the superimposition of mere variables, but in the superimposition of coherent/incoherent becoming, i.e. the becoming of relations between simple variables.

The old Marxist concept of fusion or synthesis is still far too philosophical a concept, resulting on the one hand in empiricism and on the other in a transcendental type of synthesis, a concept that should definitely be replaced by that of superposition, i.e. the vectorial and complex addition of two variables. The law of quantum fusion is not that of the connection between the macroscopic and the microscopic on the condition of a unitary measure, because this would also be nothing more than a transcendental synthesis. The "fusion" of the productive forces with the relations of production should be conceived from the outset as a

superposition or addition of vectors, which places us in the realm of formal and by no means empirical science: One adds the vectors representing the productive forces and relations of production in order to then arrive at two types of superimposable empirical data. (Ibid.: 165) The superposition inheres an indeterminate existence and has the quantum as its essence, which in turn determines its virtuality. The quantum itself can be decomposed into different types of heterogeneous dualities, which in turn are developed by it (bourgeoisie/proletariat; market/organization, etc.). However, for Laruelle, the real essence of the quantum is the class struggle, which takes the generalized form of inverse relations, those of dominance and orientation (relations of production ≠ productive forces, market ≠ organization; bourgeoisie ≠ proletariat, etc.). In the class struggle, quantum Marxist rationality is always subdivided within the framework of the science of history.
Laruelle summarizes at this point: If superposition is an addition of abstract vectors in a Hilbert space, then quantization is a problem of relation between two methods of measurement or it includes the two becomings themselves (coherence/incoherence), where the problem of orientation concerns the vectors and not the real numbers. Each measurement is directional and can be exchanged for another.b

A non-commutativity must then be introduced between the two becomings in the last instance. Laruelle also borrows the principle of non-commutativity from quantum physics. It states that two inverse products or physical quantities cannot be equal and interchangeable at the same time. However, there is not only the inversion between the variables, but also the inversion of the products of variables; these are always to be understood from the point of view of their non-commutativity. Non-commutativity is a universal factor that applies to every variable in relation to another and moves unilaterally in all possible directions.

Even the class struggle is to be understood as the non-commutativity of its variables. The true quantum (not the substantial or empirical quantum), namely the class struggle, contains non-commutativity as a general divisor. Moreover, the quantum is an abstract force that affects all possible relations and not just a single relation. Laruelle can thus grasp the class struggle as a kind of quantum night, equivalent to the quarter-turn or the imaginary number; it is universal and stands for every relation, it is the condition for every revolutionary aleatoric, it requires a kind of transcendentality that functions here as sub-determination. It radiates simultaneously in both inverse directions and simultaneously in all directions. Therefore, one can never remain in a single unilateralism, neither of the market nor of the organization, even if these factors even define its possibilities.

Why is there both division and self-multiplying relations in the class struggle? And is the class struggle always to be seen in terms of dominance and struggle? If there is a science of class struggle, then there are relations and two different methods of measurement that are non-commutative in their result. Quantum theory requires non-commutativity, the inversion of two relations as functions of two methods of measurement, and this non-commutative inversion is the origin of the struggle. The class struggle therefore has nothing to do with contingency or chance; on the contrary, it is absolutely necessary in the course of the quantum model of

history.

And there is a further moment: the imaginary number as the square root of -1 creates a non-commutative class struggle with a minimal philosophical transcendence and this ultimately itself (depending on the superposition and vectorial addition). The imaginary number is the ground of the under-determination of superposition (not over-determination) and contains the elements of dominance and struggle at the heart of the unity of relation, and this means that the struggle is unfolded within the great transcendence of 1=1. There is a double transcendence to report here, that of the superposition of the virtual elements of representation and that of the quantum variables traversed by the imaginary number.

Laruelle thus introduces quantum theory into Marxism by means of the form of superposition, which is itself a processive quantum operation via a complex vectoralization. Laruelle's intention here leads to a hard scientific modeling that is explicitly directed against the exclusive dominance of philosophy and the many neo-Marxisms in Marxism. Marxism, according to Laruelle, must necessarily be connected to the imaginary and complex operation of the quantum algebra by writing a fiction of Marxism that strictly refrains from attaching a supplement, a deconstruction or a micro-politics to Marxism, because all these additions remain, in the last instance, philosophical additions. But if Laruelle himself does not ultimately remain in the philosophical problematic, the question should now be asked.
How can a new Marxist fiction be written? Laruelle understands the relationship between the productive forces and the relations of production within the framework of a historically existing economy as stages of a quantum system. They can be superposed by reducing them to state vectors and to complexities or imaginary numbers (square root of -1). The classical type of synthesis or fusion is no longer dialectical here, but neither is it deterministic in the sense of a fusion of productive forces and relations of production under the dominance of the latter.

And Marxism is now itself deployed as a vector and not within the framework of its empirical or macroscopic specificities. As a result, synthesis or fusion is conceived as an indeterministic and virtual "fusion" of state vectors that contain all the possibilities or potentialities that can be actualized in the context of a revolutionary and aleatory process, which in turn takes place inside a particle accelerator or inside a socio-economy represented by the quantum apparatus.

Here again, Laruelle returns to the disconcerting dualism of dialectical materialism and historical materialism that he has often mentioned. Laruelle rejects the duality and the Hegelian privileging of dialectical materialism and, with this move, understands historical materialism as the basis of a possible and universal knowledge of historical phenomena. Corresponding to historical materialism is the universality of quantum modeling, in particular superposition within the framework of a science of history. And the class struggle is the essence of a given socio-economy, the minimal quantum that is responsible for the fact that history exists at all, or, to put it another way, the class struggle is the quantum from which a science of history becomes possible at all and possesses an object. (Ibid.: 165)

Which of the two axioms of quantum theory – superposition and non-commutativity – has priority for Laruelle? Superposition is the form or principle of knowledge. It comes before the quantum within the production of knowledge, which is its material ground. Non-commutativity, on the other hand, is an essential property derived from the quantum, insofar as it represents the index of the minimal existence of a material for the sciences and must be treated within an apparatus and is also required for theoretical use in determining two variables with inverse products. Let us summarize this with Laruelle: Quantum theory substitutes for the old dialectic, superposition substitutes for totality, and the quantum substitutes for the commutativity of philosophical dialectics. Equipped with these new tools, historical materialism takes over the formalism or reality of every science, including that of history, while dialectical materialism retains its usefulness with the contingency of the quantum, which represents the essence of the material.

For Laruelle, a more concrete version of the axioms discussed so far must now include humanity. This involves the fusion of the masses with theory, both of which struggle in a non-hierarchical and non-commutative manner. As one element takes up the other, various effects or possible events occur, constituting the aleatory dynamics of history. Within a generic science, the quantum can no longer be defined in the way that Planck did with the constant for physics, but the quantum must be defined in the context of humanity divided into bourgeoisie and proletariat. In order to arrive at the immanence of the revolutionary process itself, an externally fixed constant must be rejected; instead, a constant must be installed, which is the subject=X, whereby the two variables (bourgeoisie/proletariat) that are sent into the quantum apparatus of history must also be considered. What establishes the science of history as reality is now the contingency of the quantum, which constitutes capitalism and its internal struggle (this is not about the real, which defines the form of science as a superposition). The class struggle is contingent in its relation to the essence of science, but there is nothing contingent when it comes to the scientific definition of the object, even when it manifests itself as the effect of the struggle. (The object involves the identity of the struggle of the classes that holds the opposing parties together, through division).

Non-standard Marxism in this context is a scientific productive force, inseparably a quantum, and is at the level of the humanity-quantum, which as a relation of production is inseparably bourgeois and proletarian. For Laruelle, there are multiple interpretations of this matrix, into which new disciplines can always be implemented. This matrix does not tolerate hierarchies, but demands equality between theory and the masses within a generic theory in order to ultimately generate a new collective subjectivity. At this point, Laruelle proposes an interpretation of Marxism that is more epistemological than economic and more oriented towards those Marxists who are concerned with struggle and humanity. However, this risks an interpretation that runs parallel to economic theory and its materialism by favoring the productive forces, which are no longer economic but scientific and positivist.

It should be noted here that Laruelle's relationship to the analysis and critique of the economy of capital remains undefined, as he himself does not have a truly well-founded concept of capital. He thus inevitably remains within the hegemonic problematic of philosophy that he has just criticized.

Furthermore, the problem of the determination of the fusion of variables arises, a

determination that decides on their relative effects and/or their orientations. Within a philosophically oriented fusion, in which one term fuses with the other term (both as simple variables), there is a division into two, whereby the fusion is always overdetermined. This creates an indexing that verticalizes or transcendentalizes the fusion. Within a scientifically oriented Marxism, on the other hand, the problem of economism in the sciences or scientism, mathematical or set theory is more likely to arise. Laruelle wants to break with these versions of Marxism by recognizing the same status of variables, which are nothing more than (complex) variables here and remain so within relations that are underdetermined and non-communicative. Isn't there still a version of a third term to be reported that takes on the function of a determination? It is that of the sums of the variables via the superposition, insofar as it persists in their products. If the integrated sum of the inverse products or the two aspects of the quantum are sent into the quantum apparatus, being treated in it in the style of a revolutionary aleatory, if not as an aleatory revolution, then it still remains necessary for this apparatus to exist insofar as it forms a universal closure through superposition, namely a particle accelerator or a closed theoretical locus that can simulate at least a quasi-transcendental dimension of the apparatus. (see also Barad with Bohr)

Marxism now becomes a quantum with Laruelle and remains definitively anti-Hegelian insofar as it recognizes at least a sub-determination for every aspect and relation (via quantum superposition). (Ibid.: 169) Determination, however, now returns in the form of a particle accelerator, of which one is perhaps all too quick to say that it represents nothing more than the sciences. However, this particle accelerator is to be understood here as a quasi-transcendental apparatus, inseparably scientific and philosophical at the same time, in that it accumulates two properties in a superposed state. In his book "*The Possessed Individual*", Arthur Kroker himself implodes this particle accelerator with which, in his view, Baudrillard has to read: "To read Baudrillard with the force of a particle accelerator and to cause his thinking to implode into the dark density of the nuclear energies of a black hole" (Kroker 1998: 108).

Laruelle now discusses under-determination. He distinguishes a) the unilateral and positivist under-determination of fusion by the sciences, b) the unilateral over-determination by philosophy, and c) the universal under-determination within and by the particle accelerator, which conjugates the unilateralities of the two variables and finally retains as generic what remains of fusion. Laruelle calls this last sub-determination determination-in-the-last-instance. Simple unilaterality is distinguished here from superposition, which is not unilateral, although it is quasi a third term, but as the form of a result that knows no triangulation. The superposition does not result in an autonomous third term of a structure, but persists in an integral way within a scientific-philosophical closure. The particle accelerator devalues the particular or undulatory product that comes from it. But the devaluation itself pulls it down to the level of the base and center of gravity, which is due to the complex or imaginary numbers, as if a building were collapsing in its own ruins, like a break in equilibrium or a devaluation within the transcendental process of elevation. The quantum particle accelerator thus creates a new space.

The complex form of science still stands on one side and its matter on the other. However, the formal ground as superposition and the material ground as quantum remain insufficient with regard to the constitution of a generic theory if they remain separate on their respective sides. Laruelle therefore introduces the efficient ground as a group that assembles the quantum apparatus by taking the initiative within its materiality and function. This group is the

subject of generic Marxism as Agent=X. The agent, which is probably to be understood as an observer, forms a part of the apparatus, it belongs to it despite external conditions, given the immanent probabilistic effects of the apparatus and the structuring by its own quantum becoming, whereby it appears as an equivalent of the final ground, which is in reality an aleatory ground. What produces the apparatus? It is potentialities (within the indefinite superposition) that become real or actual when the apparatus exists.

The subject of Marxist theory is ambiguous for Laruelle: a) the superposition of a collectivity of individuals within a particular socio-economy and its social and historical transformations, b) duality of the bourgeoisie/proletariat variables conjugated in inverse and indeterminate products to form the anthropological quantum, c) the subject=X that the variables actualize from their virtuality. Laruelle concludes that the quantum theory of history must accept the indetermination of the results of struggles.

For Laruelle, the ultimate stage of non-standard Marxism is reached with the speculative (and no longer formal) particle accelerator of history. At the same time, all physical conditions and singularities are conceived as theoretical objects or corpuscles, starting from the initial quantum, which is divided and multiplied by itself in order to achieve the potentialization of the immanence of the quantum. This not only has effects on the quantum, but also on the superposition, which is now also potentialized. There are two stages of superposition: the primary, which results in two micro/macro becomings, where the material remains empirically given and the formal becomes only through the form, and then the secondary and complex superposition, which traverses not only the form but also the material and leads to an absolutely immanent quantization. The superposition and the quantization are either those of simple variables (formal quantum theory) or they are potentialized and then possess a formalized empirical matter, that is, doubly formalized vectors, namely through the form and the matter.

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